

# STRANGER THINGS



## Armageddon

## Armageddon Book 5: Justice by inktopia

**Series:** [Stranger Things - Armageddon \[6\]](#)

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

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**Characters:** Eleven | Jane Hopper, Holly Wheeler, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Mike Wheeler, OC - Character, Unrevealed - Character

**Relationships:** Eleven | Jane Hopper/Mike Wheeler

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**Summary:**

Episode 0: Somewhere far away, somewhere beyond the reaches of mortal men, a foretelling declares the end of the world.

Episode 1: Mike and Eleven have ultimately reunited since they lost each other a year back in a classroom where the lights flickered and a nightmare came to life. They have finally gained a beautiful moment to cherish their bond, but a monster from Eleven's past has finally awakened and had taken a vow to take back what is rightfully it's. Can Mike celebrate the most crucial day in Eleven's life properly before the world ends?

[Completed]

## 1. Episode 0: Prologue

# STRANGER THINGS



# Armageddon

## Prologue

*'In a certain place, not so far from a sleeping town called Hawkins, Indiana, the torn pages of a book scattered in the wind.'*

It was dinner time in the Wheeler house. Karen Wheeler was arranging food on the table. She placed three plates, one each for Ted, Nancy, and Mike, and then groaned in frustration. Mike had gone camping with the Byers and would be spending the weekend there. Nancy had gone to Atlanta on a school trip and will be away for the weekend as well. Karen grimaced, she was becoming so forgetful.

*'In a certain place, not so far from a sleeping town called Hawkins, Indiana, a pen ran out of ink as the lights went off.'*

Ted was switching channels on the TV, but there wasn't anything exciting playing that night. He was slowly becoming irritated, but suddenly he froze. A show was playing, a show that brought memories from the past. A father and his child were walking down a path hidden in a forest. Leaves scattered in the winds as the forest welcomed them in its abode. He sat down on the lazy boy and pulled a lever.

*'In a certain place, not so far from a sleeping town called Hawkins, Indiana, a badge was ripped from a uniform.'*

Karen placed some chicken on Ted's plate and sighed, *'the man was becoming obsessed with chicken, just as Mike had become so obsessed with Eggos since last year.'* She poured some milk into a glass and placed it in front of a small chair. She set a bowl of cereals besides the glass and called out "Holly, come for dinner. Holly?" Holly was nowhere to be seen. Karen pressed the bridge of her nose with the thumb and index of her right hand and breathed, "That kid!"

*'In a certain place, not so far from a sleeping town called Hawkins, Indiana, a batter missed the ball that streaked by his bat.'*

Holly heard her mother calling for her, and she made a funny face.

She didn't want to drink milk again, so she had decided to hide in Mike's bedroom. She was going through a book that she had scavenged from Mike's drawer. It was filled with lots of pictures and strange words. It was different from all the other books in his room. It was very old, and the papers had become yellow. But she liked the pictures; they looked like the paintings in her father's room.

*'In a certain place, near a sleeping town called Hawkins, Indiana, the remaining wall of a castle fell down.'*

She opened a random page and immediately started laughing. A man wearing strange silver-colored clothing rode a majestic horse toward a great wall. It was a magnificent picture. She squinted her eyes to read the name of the horse. It read 'Wind.' Holly really liked that name. She decided to ask Santa for a horse like that next year.

*'In a certain place, near a sleeping town called Hawkins, Indiana, a skateboard rolling downhill came to a stop.'*

Holly tilted the book towards the light and opened another page. The picture showed a ground with no trees, or houses, or animals. It was empty except for the man dressed in strange silver-colored clothes who was lying on the ground. Red ink spotted the man's dress and the field around him. In front of the man, the sky was covered in black ink. She didn't like that. Some strange looking monsters were coming out of the black ink. She didn't like them at all.

*'In a certain place, not so far from a sleeping town called Hawkins, Indiana, a radio came to life for the last time.'*

Holly turned the next page, and it showed the man's face. He had a square face full of grey beard and had many cuts on his face. Then she noticed the eyes and gasped in amazement. They were the eyes of a brave man, a man who didn't fear the monsters coming towards him. She read the word, 'Defiance.' Her dad had explained it to her once, *'It means someone who is not afraid to rise up against bad people.'*

*'In a certain place, not so far from a sleeping town called Hawkins, Indiana, a small toy rocket came crashing down on earth.'*

Holly noticed that the monsters were still coming. She was sure that

the monsters wanted to hurt the man, so she urged the man to run away from there. She turned the next page and bent over the picture. The man was facing the hoard of monsters by himself. The picture showed the man's back as he was kneeling on the ground on one foot, but his head was held high. He had one hand placed on his raised knee and another fist raised towards the sky. Even in front of so many monsters, the man would not run away. She read the word, 'Justice,' she knew its meaning. She felt proud for some unknown reason.

*'In a certain place, not so far from a sleeping town called Hawkins, Indiana, a human who believed, finally embraced mortality.'*

Holly heard her Mommy calling her in an angry tone. Holly embraced 'Defiance' and turned another page. Then she lifted the book in her hands in a quick motion. Holly looked at the picture carefully. The man was reaching for the skies as a bright light shone from the sky onto his raised hand. An even brighter object gleamed through that light, it had a long curved shape with a golden handle, a sliver of white light flashed below the handle. The rest of the object was adorned with magnificent patterns. Holly looked in awe as the darkness recoiled from that light, the monsters covered their eyes and screamed in agony. She read the words written in big letters next to the picture; she spelled them one word at a time.

"The Sword of Destiny has returned to The Last Knight."

*'In a certain place, not so far from a sleeping town called Hawkins, Indiana, a door made of wood burst into a shower of splinters and a man with white hair and wearing a black suit walked in to claim what was rightfully his.'*

And this is how the world ends.

## **2. Act I: The Past**

### **Summary for the Chapter:**

Episode 1 answers one of the most fundamental questions in the ST universe.

Why is Eleven so entangled with Mike Wheeler? is it love? Or is it something beyond the reaches of Human Emotions?

It's neither and both at the same time.

### **Notes for the Chapter:**

Welcome to the first episode of the Epic named 'Stranger Things 3.0 - Armageddon.' The episode is riddled with minute details, clues and hidden messages that point to upcoming episodes. We are still in the canon ST universe and this EU is written to follow the universe created by the show.

### **Prologue**

"Tell that story again," the little boy clapped his hands in excitement.

"Again? Okay!" The old man smiled.

The old man sat beside the boy and spoke in a rumbling voice, "One day, somewhere up in the sky, somewhere far away from here, a name was written amongst the stars even before it had a soul. It burnt fiercely and bathed the cosmos with blinding light."

He paused a moment and then continued, "But the Star was sad because like all other heavenly bodies it was destined to die alone in the vast cosmos."

"But it never noticed a fiery comet that was streaking towards it through the cosmos, leaving a violet light in its wake," an old woman uttered the names as she joined them.

The boy's eyes went wide with awe even though he had heard the story many times, "I know those names, they are..."

The old man interjected, "You know the names boy. But do you know what they stood for? You don't have the slightest clue."

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## **Episode 1: Justice**

### **Act I: The Past**

"That'll be a dollar and fifty, Miss," the shopkeeper laid a small parcel on the counter.

"Miss?"

The slender woman standing in front of the counter jerked her head towards the man in surprise. She was lost in thoughts that undoubtedly made her happy. The woman smiled absently and then carefully picked the parcel up in her hands.

"Here, keep the change," she gave a note to the man and started walking towards the door. A small photo frame caught her attention as she was about to open the door. She picked it up in her hand and scrutinized it as if she was thinking about making a purchase. The shopkeeper bent forward and looked at the woman; "Only a dollar, Miss. Very hardy frame, won't break that easy."

The woman nodded and came to the counter to make the payment, '*It was perfect.*' The man took the photo frame from her hands and started wrapping it in a blue colored paper. Just before making the payment, the woman asked, "Excuse me, what's the time?"

"Sorry Miss, the clock stopped working since yesterday. Tried changing batteries. Still, the damn hands are stuck at 10.59. I reckon they still tell the time correctly twice a day," the man laughed. The woman gave a shrug and handed the man a note. This time she took the change.



At the same time, somewhere far away from the store, a black sedan was cruising smoothly through the busy traffic as it made its way to an unknown destination. Two people sitting at the back were going through an old file, its age could be guessed from the worn-out cover that had lost its original color.

"There!" the man pointed to a photograph that was apparently taken a long time ago. The woman sitting beside him picked up the picture and studied it carefully. It was too old to notice all the details, there were cracks all over the paper, but an object caught the woman's attention.

"You sure we can't find it?" The woman was curious. It looked like a straightforward item, old but simple.

"I'm sure. I've tried, and I've failed, I tracked one of them outside the country last year but lost it at the end."

"There's more than one?"

"We commissioned two of them, one for use and another for backup. It was dangerous to create more as it could have led to a loss of control." The man knew what he was talking about.

"Okay, so there are two of these, you lost yours..."

The man fanned his palm in front of his face in irritation, "It was an accident, I kept it in a very secure place."

"Uh huh, so the other ...."

"...is at our destination." The man didn't let her finish, "It's at a safe place, apparently hidden from the world."

"But there's another one outside the country, didn't you say there were only two?" there was an alarm in the woman's voice.

"No, the one I tracked last year was probably mine, it was probably procured by someone who will never understand its true value. Still, I have no clue how it went around half the world."

"Can't you just make a copy? You said you remembered the details,

how hard can it be? It's not rocket science." The woman was clearly irritated with the car ride.

"I remember it as if its right in front of me, I know how it looks, how much it weighs, how tall or short it is, how it feels like holding it. I KNOW IT BECAUSE I FUCKING MADE IT." The man screamed out the last words.

But a moment later he composed himself and sighed, "A duplicate won't do. I know how it works. We're going to retrieve the second and the last remaining one. End of discussion." the finality in the man's voice was audible.

On the other side of the city, the slender woman was strolling along the road that led to her destination. She was almost running, but the truth was that she actually felt like dancing. It had been so long since she had felt such happiness. She turned the curve and then suddenly stopped in front of a flower shop. A beautiful bouquet of bright flowers caught her attention. She went to the florist and asked him to make her a smaller one. The man looked at her in surprise, the bouquet was an odd choice for the event which the woman spoke of, but she was determined to get it. She told the florist to keep the change. Before leaving, she requested the florist to add one more flower to the bouquet, again a strange choice. It was nothing critical, nothing that cost extra money but it was something that made her happy and left the florist baffled.

The black sedan was idling in front of the red light, engines growling as if a hound on the hunt was leashed by its master. People crossed the road in a serpentine line. A couple walked by the windshield. The guy carried an almost brand-new camera while the girl carried a folder in her arms. The couple was smiling at each other as they crossed the street. The men bent forward to get a good look through the windshield, he eyed the couple as they crossed the street. The woman was curious, "What's up? Know these two?" The man didn't answer the question. He comfortably sat back and opened the file. His eyes were fixated on the photograph.

The slender woman finally reached home. She had to walk a long way to get here, but she was happy because it was worth the journey. Maybe she'll repair the car once she had enough money. Now that the bad times were over, anything could be possible. She fumbled the key and inserted it in the lock at the fifth attempt as her hands kept shaking. She opened the door, went inside and pushed the door behind her. At first glance, it appeared as if the house was empty, but it won't be for long. She smiled, today was a beautiful day, and she would ensure everything goes according to her plan.

*'Her dreams would come true today.'*

She placed her bag on the table and went straight to the kitchen, all the while humming a song that crept into her mind, *'Summertime'* by Ella Fitzgerald. A moment later, she picked a plate from the utensils rack and proceeded to unpack the small box that she had purchased. The box was packed a bit too thoroughly. She spent some time patiently removing the tapes, brought out a small item from that box and placed it at the center of the plate. The item had a unique text inscribed on the top that would have made no sense to anyone. In fact, if people knew the true purpose of the item, they would have rolled their eyes at the stupidity. But she smiled and thought, 'It's perfect, just perfect.' Once the preparations were complete, she left the kitchen and moved upstairs to execute the next steps of her small but grand plan. She kept humming *'Summertime'*, as she reached a room at the end of a corridor and turned the latch. With barely contained excitement she opened the door and stepped into unmade memories. Tears came to her eyes as she realized that those memories were no longer just a fragment of her imagination, they had already been made by someone else. She opened a wardrobe and took out a photo that had not seen the light of the day in a rather long time. But it was time to assign it to its rightful place in this house. She carefully cleaned the photo and placed it in the frame that she had bought today.

The black sedan cruised smoothly through the last stretch of the highway and entered a small lane that led to a sleepy neighborhood.

The man suddenly closed the file and peeked outside, it had been a lifetime since he was last here. He tried to think about the last time, there were memories, but they were neither happy nor sad. He sighed and nodded at the woman sitting beside him. In response, the woman picked up a small briefcase and placed it on her lap.

The slender woman placed the plate and the photo on a small tea table in the middle of the room. Then she went outside and returned with the bouquet, it was out of the packaging and was now resting in an old flower vase. The flower vase had a sinuous black line wrapped around its base. She grinned at the figure sitting in front of her, "Today is a good day, in fact, I'd say today is the second-best day of our lives!"

Suddenly the bell rang, and the woman glanced back in irritation. She kept hoping that the person would go away, but to her dismay, the bell kept ringing.

She sighed, "I'll be right back."

The women went to the door and noticed that the chain was dangling from the hook. Did she forget to put it back after her arrival? But today was a good day so nothing could go wrong. She opened the door and noticed two persons standing outside. A man and a woman stood in the shadows, they were well dressed and carried a certain sense of authority. She switched on the porch light to get a better look at them and then her heart stopped. She remembered the man, in fact, she recognized the man as if they had met yesterday. He represented a forgotten past that was written in blood. She slammed the door on them and ran back to the room to dial a number.

A moment later two muffled sounds rang in the air, and two moments later the door crashed open as the man and women entered the house and made their way to the room. The woman dialed the last digit of the number from her recent memory when she heard another muffled sound. She was suddenly hit by a powerful force that threw her onto the carpet. The receiver flew away from her hand and crashed into the wall then came to rest beside her head.

It took her a moment to realize that her back was on fire. It felt as if someone had inserted a glowing hot rod between her ribcage and was twisting it around to find where her heart was. Tears flooded her vision as she tried her best to crawl forward. But it was too painful, and she couldn't breathe anymore. Suddenly she felt a strange liquid with metallic taste coming up her throat, it choked her windpipe, and she gasped to take breaths.

Something rattled within her, and she glanced upward and focused her eyes on the table. She saw the plate, the photo and the flowers, and the indistinctive figure sitting behind them. With a shock, she realized that she would die today. But she needed to save the person sitting on the chair at all costs. She gritted her teeth in desperation and used the last bit of her remaining strength to turn her head around and came face to face with the man with white hair and a black suit.

"Hello, Becky!" Dr. Martin Brenner greeted her in a pleasant tone.

At that exact same time, somewhere not far away from that city, a boy named Mike Wheeler was standing under a torrent of water. The steady stream of water rained down from above and washed away the soap that covered his body. He ran his hands all over his body to clean the soap as best as he could. Suddenly he winced in pain as his hands touched the back of his thigh. There was a knot there, right where a bullet from a silenced 22 cal. had entered the leg and then proceeded to puncture a major artery. The wound had bled severely which put his body in a shock and then his heart just stopped working. Mike should've been dead, but then a girl with magic powers jumpstarted his heart and saved his life. It was a medical marvel but the crazy fact was that she was not a doctor, she was a thirteen-year-old kid with some ordinary telekinetic powers. That was supposed to be an impossible task, but Mike Wheeler always believed in impossibility. His belief saved him that day, and another day, and another day before that. In fact, he lost the count of times Eleven had saved his life. He also knew that Eleven will save him the next day, the day after that, and another day after that. He wasn't ashamed about that fact. Boys in school would laugh at the news that Mike Wheeler needed a girl to save his weak ass. But he knew something

few else in the world knew. He knew that he had saved Eleven many times, from herself.

Mike turned the knob to stop the shower and used the towel to dry himself. Then he put on some nightclothes and went back to his room where his mother was sitting on his bed. She kissed her boy and then left the room. He lied in bed and started thinking about Eleven. He had not seen her for a long time. After he was released from the hospital, he was put under house arrest by Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler, who were actually Nazis under disguise in his opinion. Mike knew that he was absolutely fine, but the wound in his leg would still burn at times. And his family was determined about not buying a new cycle for him, especially after he crashed the earlier one on his way back from the Snowball.

Hopper, the local police chief, was a crazy bastard, and unfortunately, he was also Eleven's father. Sometime after the ordeal, he had taken Eleven back to the cabin and had not let her come out as well, *'House Arrest.'* Mike wondered if she even understood what the term meant. But she also needed rest just like he did. While he was fighting for his life on the streets of Hawkins, Eleven was fighting a battle with herself to save her soul. Eleven still visited him sometimes in his dreams, but it had been a long time since he had run his hands through her *'Poofy'* hair or kissed her. The thought made him blush.

Mike had kissed Eleven a total of four times. Thrice under proper circumstances, once under tremendous pressure when Eleven was about to snap the neck of the man who had shot Mike on that fateful night. It didn't matter, the kisses were still fantastic. But still not as much amazing as Eleven, and her beautiful smile and fluffy cheeks, Mike smiled. Suddenly there was a knock at his window, and Mike's heart stopped for a moment.

He looked up, fully expecting to see a man climbing inside with a wicked looking gun and taking aim at him. Then he saw the most incredible sight he had ever seen. The ranking changed from time to time, but this was a fantastic sight indeed. Eleven, the girl from his dreams was sitting on the window, flashing a smile that defeated the sun and dangling her legs freely below the pane. *'What the fuck?'* Oh, it was a dream after all. Then he got up and reached the window.

Eleven jumped down and hugged him tightly. He instinctively ran his hand through her hair. It was so 'Poofy,' he needed that shampoo to try himself. She smelled like Strawberries. A few seconds later she left the embrace and studied him with her big soulful eyes.

"Hello, Mike!"

"Umm, it's you, right? It's not a dream?"

"Why would this be a dream?"

"Okay, you are sitting on my window at 11 PM, and it's not a dream. Is Hopper okay?" Mike was alarmed. There was no way Hopper would have let her out of the house at night.

"He's right there." Eleven pointed towards the sliver of pavement that was visible from his window.

Suddenly Mike had a sinking feeling inside his stomach. He remembered a lecture given by Mr. Clarke one day. He was explaining about ancient humans who had developed different hunting techniques. One of the key turning points was the invention of traps. The ancient humans would dig a giant hole in the ground, place some leaves to cover it up and put some food on the top. When the animal came to eat the food, they would drop straight into the hole and then the humans would kill it by throwing stones and arrows.

*'Barbarians.'*

Mike looked out the window and saw a direct line of sight to the pavement, a police van was waiting there. He swallowed and tried to see inside the car. *'Is that a gun?'*

Eleven looked at Mike and laughed heartily, "He brought me here, he told me to check up on you."

Okay, Mike was now sure about three possible scenarios.

First, he was in a dream.

Second, he was dead and had somehow managed to get into heaven.

Third, Hopper was actually a psychopath who was laying a trap to justify shooting Mike since he had kissed his daughter in front of him, on the lips.

It was the third, he told himself. Then he looked at Eleven and was taken aback. Her eyes glittered in the faint light that was coming from the window.

"Eleven?"

"Mike, today is my birthday!"



### 3. Act II: The Present

#### Episode 1: Justice

#### Act II: The Present

In a small city, somewhere in a state called Indiana, a woman named Becky Ives embraced destiny as the man from her past walked towards the table where three items awaited the end of an era. The first item, a cake was inscribed with a name '*Jane Eleven Ives.*' Beside the cake laid a photo of her estranged niece, Jane, given to her by a policeman from the town of Hawkins, Indiana and besides that lied an old vase that contained eleven bright Sunflowers. The policeman had told a name that her niece liked, '*Eleven.*'

Martin looked at the table, clearly amazed to see the items and then laughed. "Damn, I completely forgot, today is my daughter's birthday!"

A chair was placed on the other side of the table. A woman sat in that chair, straight-backed. She looked straight into the eyes of Martin as he crouched in front of the table. She kept repeating a sequence of words like a broken tape recorder. Martin looked at her still eyes and smiled. '*The treatment was effective.*'

At that exact moment, somewhere in a sleepy town named Hawkins, Indiana, Mike Wheeler held his soulmate's hand in a tight grip because he was at a loss for words and had no fucking clue about what to do with her. Kissing her was natural, bringing her back from the dead was a little straightforward, fighting a pack of demo-dogs was a piece of cake, lying to his mother about Eleven was somewhat simpler as well. But now he had forgotten the birthday of the most important girl in his life. He thought about Dad who had never forgotten his wife's birthday even once. He could hear his father in his head, "Son, I'm sorry to be the bearer of bad news. But you are a

disgrace."

Eleven understood the predicament and pinched Mike's cheek, "You didn't know. Even I didn't know. Hopper told me a few days back, I never told you." Mike was relieved for a second, but then he cursed, "Shit. We need a cake."

Eleven smiled at him, and her eyes twinkled as a box floated upwards from somewhere outside and hovered in front of his window, it was floating in the air. Mike gasped at the sight but didn't lose his shit. He believed in the impossible, and he had no problem with the absurd idea of Eleven making a box float with her mind. So, he kept on staring with a slacked jaw as the box was pushed by an invisible hand into his room and landed on his bed.

Mike ran to fetch his Supercom and then froze as reality hit him. He wanted his friends here to celebrate Eleven's birthday. It would be the first with her friends, and it was indeed a moment to cherish. But then he remembered and cursed quietly. First of all, inviting Lucas meant inviting Max. Mike never got to know why Eleven was pissed off at her. He noticed Eleven giving Max the cold shoulder during the night of the Snowball but didn't get the chance to prod further. He remembered how Eleven tightly gripped his arm when Max came to talk to them. *'Was she afraid of Max? That made no fucking sense.'* He also didn't want Max's lifeless body to fly out of his room in the middle of the night and land on Hopper's van. The man had enough on his plate already. Still, he could call Lucas and request him to not bring Max, that might work. But that still left a big problem. If the guys came here, they could not use the door.

"Hi Mrs. Wheeler, we are here to celebrate Eleven's birthday."

"Yup, she was Mike's date for the snowball."

"And yes, she is currently in his room, probably used the window to get in."

"We have no idea what they were doing till now, probably sucking face."

He had heard of '*Gulags*' in Russia, people who went there never left

it alive. He was one Supercom message away from being in one. Even if they used the window to get in like Eleven did, it might not work. There were enough reasons for his mom to find out and then.... 'Gulag.' That kind of ruled out inviting anyone else tonight. He was still waiting in front of the wardrobe when Eleven came close and caught his arm;

"Mike, its okay. You don't need to call them tonight."

"Uhh, yeah... I mean."

Eleven quickly winked at him, "We'll see them tomorrow. I have a surprise for you."

Mike swallowed, he didn't like surprises anymore, especially since they either ended up abducting his friends, or turned them evil, or tried to end the world, or killed Eleven, or attempted to kill him. Eleven laughed and dragged him back to the bed, where the box waited.

Mike opened the box and sighed, it was a beautiful cake that looked like a waffle. He wished he was the one to get it for her. The text on the top stated, 'Jane Eleven Hopper.' Mike understood the '*Eleven*,' he also understood the '*Hopper*.'

But "Jane?"

"It's my name, my mother gave it to me."

Mike's jaw made a dash towards the floor, he fucking hated surprises.

Martin ran a hand across the face of the woman who was sitting in front of him. The woman didn't flinch a muscle and kept repeating her mantra. Of course, she couldn't do anything, about a decade back Martin had used electric shock to fry her brain. He still remembered the voltage setting on the dial. '450 v,' enough to cook the brain and part of the spinal cord. The subject lost her memories, sanity and became partially paralyzed. He didn't mind, with all the media attention, killing her would have been difficult. This was considerably easier but at the same time notably worse than death.

He didn't care.

"You have a mom?" Mike was simply amazed.

"Don't be funny Mike, everyone has a mom."

Mike swallowed and thought hard about how much of his foot was currently residing in his mouth.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean that."

Mike knew almost every intricate detail of Eleven's life, he never had to ask her. He had once managed to become a god in a field of fireflies where he touched and lived through Eleven's memories one by one, then he brought her back from the dead. He didn't see her mother there.

"What is she like? I mean, your mom."

"She's very nice Mike. She doesn't speak much, but she speaks to me. She also likes sunflowers, she lives in a city, I met her some time back, I think you should meet her. She will like you, and you'll like her as well." Eleven finished the sentences in a torrent of words as if she had been planning to tell Mike about her for a very long time.

"It's alright El, next time when you go to meet her, I'll come along. But today is your birthday. Shouldn't you be with your mom?" Mike grimaced at the thought but didn't reveal it on his face, Eleven needed her mother more than she needed Mike at the moment. After all, Mike had been in her life for more than a year. Eleven probably didn't get so much time to spend with her mother. *'Hopper, you asshole!'*

Eleven flashed an earnest smile. "Don't worry Mike. I visited her today in my mind. She wished me a happy birthday. We also cut a magic cake." She was pleased.

*'What the hell? Can she interact with people in her dreams now? Wasn't it only voice?'* Mike hated surprises a lot.

Martin lighted the candles that adorned the top of the cake and proceeded to blow them out with a quick breath. The flame wicked out, and he flashed a happy smile, *'Just like the old days.'* He got up to flex his knees but then stopped mid-way as the candle came back to life with a spark. Martin looked at in awe, as if he was beholding magic. Then he suddenly looked at the woman sitting in front of him and yanked the candles away from the cake. He gritted his teeth in frustration and threw them out of the room with full force.

Eleven sat on Mike's bed and used her power to keep the door forced against the frame. Mike had warned her, "Mom and Nancy are a pair of thieves, they can open locks."

Eleven could also open locks, does that mean she was also a thief? What will she steal from here? She giggled, she would steal Mike. A sequence of mild knocks came from the door. She instantly translated them on the fly. *'Dot, dash dash dot, dash dash dot, dash dash dash.'* Mike always knew what she liked, and she loved the code.

Mike sneaked into the room with a box of Eggos. He had begged his mom to keep a box in the refrigerator at all times. Apparently, he had become a massive fan of Eggos since Will went missing last year. He also had to endure immense pain and suffering, like actually having to eat all the Eggos before they expired. *'They taste like soggy cardboard,'* but he would do anything for Eleven. He sat on the bed opposite El and took out three Eggos from the box. Eleven was curious at the count, will Mike eat two or will she eat two? Maybe they'll each eat one and a half? Mike placed two Eggos on two plates that he had also managed to sneak from the kitchen and put the third Eggo on top of the box. Then he planted two candles on the cake and lighted them. Eleven kept looking at Mike with utmost concentration. At long last, her dream was coming true.

When Mike had recovered a bit from his ordeal, Hopper took Eleven back to the cabin. She had stayed by Mike's side for one week, never leaving even for a moment. By the end of the week, she was pretty much covered with sweat, grime, and fatigue. She didn't go even

though Mike repeatedly requested her to take rest. There was a reason for her strange behavior. On a fateful evening, she had placed her hand on Mike's heart and promised, "I'll save you, so you could save me."

She'll keep her promise so Mike could keep his and that's why she didn't leave until Mike was safe. Dustin laughed at the idea. He said it was called a '*Paradox*.' She didn't know what it meant, she only understood that because of that promise she had made, no one could break their pledges individually. Eleven will save Mike so he could save her, who in turn could save him so he could save her, then on and on. Their promises had neither a beginning nor an end. Her head hurt just thinking about it, but she really liked the idea. Words were strange, but they carried so much emotion.

When she moved back to the cabin, one day Hopper went missing for the entire day. He came back late at night and gave her a gift that she treasured above everything, well, a bit less than Mike. It was a photo of her Mama. Hopper gave her a photo frame made of glass and wood so she could keep the picture safe. She liked the idea a lot as well.

Martin picked up the photo frame that was resting beside the cake. Becky was nearly unconscious now, but she gasped as Martin threw the frame to the floor. The glass shattered, then Martin put his foot on the photo and broke the frame. He bent over and picked up the broken frame in his hands, careful not to let the glass nick him. With a slight twist, he split the structure in two and took out the photo. He held it under the light and smiled. His daughter had grown up. She was wearing a blue dress with pink spots and a pink ribbon at the waist. She also had some make-up on her face. Martin hated all of it. But then he smiled as he noticed her eyes. She looked strong, '*NO*,' powerful. He'd do something about that voluminous hair, it's a disadvantage at times. Martin flipped the photo, '*Snowball?*'

Hopper showed Eleven a strange looking paper on the night he gave her the photograph. It said Jane Hopper, daughter of Jim Hopper and

Teresa Ives. She was curious, why not '*Jane Ives*?' Hopper explained that using the title right now was risky, especially since she would be going to school very soon. People did not know Jane Hopper, but there were too many people in this world who knew a girl named Jane Ives who had never been born. But he confirmed, "You'll always be Jane Ives, El. No one can take that away from you," Hopper ran his fingers through her hair.

Eleven said with confidence, "I'd want to be Jane Hopper Ives," Hopper had never felt so happy as he felt that day. He didn't know what to say. So, he did the only thing possible, he grinned a broad smile through his mustache at Eleven. She smiled and hugged her father.

Hopper was thinking about all the additional headaches that she would have to face in school when suddenly he noticed her eyes. They held a curious gaze; one Hopper would refer to Joyce as '*The calm before the Fucking Typhoon*.' He sighed and glanced at the bookshelf 'Another one then.' The rate at which he was buying bookshelves was sure to raise uncomfortable questions like 'Hopper, you making a library?' But Hopper didn't mind, if Eleven wanted to break Bookshelves when she was mad then he would ensure that she would get to break bookshelves when she was mad, it was better than the time she had thrown a ten-ton tree at him. And he had the prototype medicine given to him by Dr. Owens, it was designed to reduce hemorrhages in the brain, something that killed her when she closed the gate from hell and pushed Cerberus back into slumber. Now the medicine would save her from her hemorrhages which originated due to power use. If that didn't work then Mike 'Jesus' Wheeler will step in and bring her back from the dead. Hopper mused, 'Breaking a bookshelf or two at times didn't pose such a big threat anymore.'

"I want to be Jane Eleven Hopper Ives." Eleven decided her name.

Hopper had a sudden recollection of Him filling a form for a criminal whose name had twenty-two letters. He sighed, "Why would you want to use that damn name given to you by that psychopath from the lab?"

"Cause Mike likes that name."

"Damn it, Wheeler!"

"He says I'm pretty!" Eleven was blushing now.

Martin was looking at the photo for quite some time now. The woman came beside him and peeked.

"That her?"

"Yes, meet Eleven."

"She's quite pretty, she's nothing like the photo you had shown me earlier."

"Don't worry, I'll take care of this. Where she'd be going, she doesn't need to look pretty." Martin knew better than anyone else about what his daughter was, being *'Pretty'* wasn't one of them.

Eleven also noted a date in that paper. Hopper said that it was the day she was born, it was her birthday. She didn't have birthdays before, so she had no idea what it meant. Hopper then sat beside her and explained "Your birthday is the day when all the people who love you come together to have a grand party. They'll come, no matter where they are, or how they are, they'll always come to celebrate the day you were born."

"Mike will come?"

"Oh, he'll come, he'll come for sure," Hopper was studying a piece of rope that rested on the workbench.

And now her dream was finally coming true. Mike came to her birthday because he had loved her. Well, SHE came to him, but Hopper explained that Mike was injured so he couldn't come. She needed to go to him, and so, he had driven her tonight. She didn't mind because she saved Mike that day and she knew the extent of his injuries. With a shudder, she recalled Dr. Owens' voice as he guided her on how to jumpstart hearts and bind arteries using her mind.



Mike was singing *'Happy Birthday'* when Eleven breathed hard on the candles, and they winked out. Mike clapped his hands and flashed a grin at Eleven. She proceeded to grin back. Then Mike handed her a knife, and she pressed it against the cake. She carefully cut a piece and picked it up. Now she remembered what Hopper told her to do, she smiled and held the piece against Mike's mouth.

Martin curved a slice of the cake with surgical precision. He picked the piece up and took a bite, "Good cake, what's the flavor? Hmm, WAFFLES?"

Becky couldn't respond to that question. The bullet that was shot at her a few minutes ago had ruptured her intestines on its way in and had sent a barrage of blood up to her throat. She was choking on her own blood. She groaned as the man proceeded to enjoy the cake. He looked content.

"I'd like to give you guys a piece, but you're in no condition to take a bite. And I'm sure Teresa won't mind," Martin licked his fingers as he finished the slice.

Mike held a slice of cake to Eleven's mouth, she swallowed the whole article in one go and nearly choked. Mike laughed as he ran his hand over her back. Eleven glared back at him but laughed once she saw his face. Mike then brought out another plate and placed a piece of cake on it. Then he put the spare Eggo beside it and looked at the window. Eleven smiled and nodded as the plate slowly rose in the air and drifted towards the police van parked below the house. It hovered a moment beside the door and then a hand came out and took it. Eleven smiled at the van and turned her eyes back at Mike, who looked like he had witnessed Godzilla itself.

*'He's keeping a tab on us.'* Mike thought. He wanted to kiss her tonight, it was her birthday after all. He had seen his dad kiss her mom on her birthday. But he was running out of options.

*The first option;* he could kiss her right here, right now, which would

then be followed by Hopper ramming the vehicle through their main gate.

*The second option;* he could close the window before he kissed her, which would then be followed by Hopper ramming the vehicle through their main gate and then an attempt to drive the car upstairs so that he could ram it through his door.

Mike swallowed and glanced at the window. Eleven probably understood, she smiled at him and then immediately bent forward and kissed him on the lips. It was a short peck, shortest to date, even shorter than the one in the gym. But it carried so much emotion that Mike felt numb. After all this time, after all the hardships, Eleven had finally understood what a kiss meant to both of them. Mike beamed as if it was his last smile in the world. Eleven grinned back, a boy who believed in the impossible had promised her that he'll save him. As long as it took, as many times it took and as many lives he had to live, he'll always bring her back. Standing at the precipice of a sky shattered by lightning, the boy spoke to her, "Believe in me."

She had believed.

Martin looked at Becky, she was bleeding profusely through the wound. It would still take some time for her to die but not much. She was suffering through agonizing pain as her lungs were slowly getting filled with her own blood. But she struggled to keep eyes open for some reason. She was looking at Teresa with hope in her eyes, she believed that someone would come and save her sister. 'Fools, all of them. Salvation came and left this Earth a long time ago.' Martin believed in something, but magic wasn't one of them. Becky's belief would not save her today because she had chosen the wrong goddess to believe in. He turned his head towards the woman standing beside him, who gave him a curious look, '*Shoot her?*'

Martin sighed, emotional people. "Don't waste bullets."

Mike stood at the window as Eleven got into the car and then the

engine started. He was still looking when Hopper peeked outside, turned his head towards Mike and nodded once. Then they drove on.

"Hopper actually likes me, maybe he's not so crazy," Mike felt ecstatic as he pulled the blanket over his body.

*'Shit, Hopper took the plate. That crazy bastard.'*

## 4. Act III: The Future

### Episode 1: Justice

#### Act III: The Future

In a sleepy town named Hawkins, Indiana, a girl named Eleven left her soulmate's home after celebrating her birthday. In a city not so far from Hawkins, Indiana, a psychopath named Martin glared at the woman who was looking frustrated now.

"Nothing doc, I checked everywhere. It's not here."

Martin sighed at the amateur, "You haven't looked in the most important place."

"No fuck boss, I checked everywhere. Maybe we shouldn't have shot her."

"No, she's irrelevant."

Brenner crouched in front of the table, "You haven't asked the guardian."

He made a mental note of the words that were coming through Teresa Ives' mouth, "Breathe... Sunflower... Three to the right, four to the left... 450... Rainbow..."

Martin smiled and got up. He had never come second in any exam throughout his entire life. He asked the woman calmly, "Where did you see the Sunflowers?"

"What? They're right on the table." She pointed as if she was explaining something to a blind person.

"Not those. Somewhere else."

"Didn't see anything that looked like a sunflower," the woman said in an irritated voice.

Martin sighed for the umpteenth time and started to climb upstairs. Suddenly the lamps lining the staircase started flickering, the girl sniffed, "Fucking ghetto." Martin shushed her and looked back at the room, a drop of blood had come out of Terry Ives' nostril. Martin smiled and resumed climbing, *'It doesn't matter, she can't stop fate.'* He reached a room from his past, a room where he had never set foot in his entire life. But he knew every item in that room as if he had made them with his own hand. He clicked the latch and pressed the door, but it didn't budge an inch. He tried again, nothing happened. The lights were still flickering downstairs. He looked at the woman and raised his eyebrows.

"I swear boss, I checked this room and didn't find shit. I left the door open."

Martin growled. "Shoot it."

In response, the woman drew a silenced revolver and shot the latch. It came off, and the door sagged, but it still held. The girl shot the hinges next. The door leaned a bit more but still held to the frame.

"I'll be right back" Martin stormed downstairs leaving the woman behind, who was now looking perplexed. She had never seen magic in her life.

Martin reached downstairs and stood in front of Terry, "A bit of humanity still left, huh? I'm surprised."

Then Martin picked up the flower vase with the sinuous black lines and viciously hit her on the temple. Her head sagged as drops of blood started falling down from her forehead where the flower vase had hit. Martin threw the flower vase on the ground, and it shattered into pieces. Bloodied petals of sunflowers scattered across the room and some of them fell on Becky as she tried her best to take a few agonizing breaths through her choked-up throat. The lights along the staircase stopped flickering and came back to a steady glow. Upstairs, the door finally gave away and bent halfway into the room. In a moment Martin reached there and kicked the door.

*A door made of wood burst into a shower of splinters as a man with white hair and black suit entered the room from his past to reclaim his future.*

Martin studied the items in the room. It was apparently a child's room. There was a cot made for a small child, and it was adorned with toys. Martin's eyes flashed around the room and then fixated on a poster of a scenery somewhere in the Bahamas. It showed a beautiful blue sky laid over a gorgeous green sea, a golden slice of beach ran through the base of the posture. A rainbow arched along the skyline. It was a majestic picture. He remembered an interview he had with Teresa, once her daughter was born she wanted to go to the Bahamas for a vacation. Martin had told her that once the tests were over, he would pay for the holiday from his own pocket. He had assured her that she deserved it. It was surprising that she didn't go to the Bahamas, even after he had made the payment.

Martin squinted his eyes and looked at the boat that was floating in the green sea in that poster, there was a name written on it in a funny looking font. The title said 'Mirasol.' Martin moved to the poster, tore it down and tapped the wall behind it. Then he nodded and punched through the wall as if it was made of cardboard. His hand went inside, and he ripped out a portion of the wall to reveal a hole, it contained a small metal box with a combination lock. The woman gasped as he turned the dial as per the instructions he had received earlier, and gently opened the door. She kept staring at Martin as he put his hands inside and brought out the item that was rightfully his. He held the object to the light as if he was looking at a treasure. The article didn't show any damage at all. He smiled at the woman who was looking much relieved now.

Martin and the woman came downstairs and carefully observed the room. Becky was lying in a pool of blood and she was probably dead, or she was hoping that she was. Terry was still sitting on the chair where Martin had left her. Her head still sagged, and there was a deep pool of blood on the ground right below where her head was hanging. He took one last glance at Teresa but didn't feel even a tinge of guilt. She had died a decade back, and the soul needed to pass on. Then he saluted the motionless heap lying on the floor, "Goodbye, Rebecca, you tried your best."

Martin put the item in a secure pocket inside his suit and nodded to

the woman. The woman nodded back and went into the kitchen. She turned the gas on and went to the other end to find something. She was going through the drawers one by one when suddenly her eyes fell on a pair of candles lying on the floor. They looked like Birthday candles and resembled rainbows that glittered under the light. She smirked and placed both carefully on the counter. Then she assessed the room properly. All the windows were closed, and there was little ventilation. The windows and doors throughout the house were also locked. She took out a matchbox and lit the candles. One and Four started to slowly melt away as the wicks came to life.

Becky was at the edge of consciousness when she heard the sound of the door closing, *'they are finally gone.'* She was not feeling the pain anymore; her entire body had become numb. She tried to focus her eyes to see her sister, but her vision was already fading away. She thought about that day. Today was the birthday of her niece, Jane Ives, a girl who could do magic and called herself Eleven. Becky had waited for this day for fourteen years, hoping that one day the girl will come back and absolve her mother.

More than a decade back, her sister Teresa *'Terry'* Ives had become pregnant with a daughter. She didn't have a husband at that time, so she found refuge with Becky. They were struggling to make ends meet. Becky was doing some small-time job that didn't pay well, and Teresa was without a job at that time. With the imminent childbirth, she was also suffering from health issues. Becky didn't mind the presence of her sister, she loved her from the bottom of her heart. They were determined to go through the ordeal at any cost.

Then one day the impossible happened. Becky came home early and saw her sister jumping around the house.

"Uhhm, you okay?"

"Yes yes, I'm fine. I got a job."

Becky smiled at her sister's happiness. They needed the money. No, Terry needed the money for herself. She was suffering from health issues due to her pregnancy, and she needed medical care as well as

good food.

"What kind of job?"

"It's in a lab called Hawkins National Laboratories, in Hawkins. Right next door."

"You got a job in a lab?" Becky was surprised.

"Yeah, they said they'd want to run some tests on me...."

"Are you out of your damn mind?"

"No no, it's okay. They said that they'll not harm the baby. I'll just have to go swimming from time to time. They said swimming is good for babies, it develops their mind." Terry flashed a triumphant smile. Her baby would grow up to become smart, "My baby would be a doctor someday."

Becky nodded cautiously, she didn't like that condition, but they needed the money. The scientists from the labs also visited her to explain the process. Dr. Martin Brenner claimed that Terry's pregnancy was causing damage to her body in some unknown way, that's why she was having a lot of health issues. Something was wrong with the child and they needed to run some simple tests and then they would recommend some treatments. Whether Terry will go for the treatment or not will depend on both her and Becky's decision. If they agreed, the lab would also pay for her therapy. Dr. Brenner had assured her.

Then Becky watched in amazement as Fate struck a swift blow to their lives, it came so fast that they didn't even have a moment to react until it was too late. Terry had a miscarriage and lost the child. A child whose name was decided even before she was born. Terry never forgave herself, she kept searching for the child in the void and ultimately perished as Fate reversed the blade to put it back in its sheath. Becky never forgave herself either.

Fate stole everything from Terry Ives. It robbed her daughter, it took her speech, it stole her smile.

*It stole her soul.*



Becky always dreamed of seeing the day when Justice arrived and held Fate accountable for the gruesome act, and Fate would have to apologize and return it all back to her.

*'It finally happened,'* she smiled through the severe pain and numbness. Her dream finally came true when the chain of the door-latch slipped by itself one day. Jane had come back to her Mother to save her from her fate. And now Becky won't be able to witness the retribution. She won't be able to testify for her sister as she reclaimed her life from her destiny.

Jane couldn't come today, but the policeman said that soon he'll bring her here and once she grew up a bit, she could come here as many times as she chooses. But Becky couldn't wait that long, she was already making plans to sell her house and then move to Hawkins with her sister. She could get a job there, and Terry could have her daughter back. Finally, after fourteen agonizing years, Teresa Ives, Becky Ives, and Jane Ives would become a family again, just like how she always imagines it to be.

Part of that dream could still come true, provided that Martin had not shot her sister. But someone else would have to take her to Hawkins. Because Becky Ives won't be there when the sun would rise in the sky the next time. *'Can the policeman do it? Can he take her to her daughter?'*

Before losing consciousness forever, a strange thought came to Becky's mind and shocked her. She remembered a particular night from her past which had nothing to do what was happening at that moment. Or maybe it did.

Terry was five months pregnant at that time. She still went to Hawkins for medical tests often but never told her the details. The only thing that mattered was that she would bring money that both of them needed desperately to survive. One day Terry came back with a gigantic smile on her face. Becky had no clue what had happened to her, but she liked that her sister was smiling. She also noticed that Terry was trying to hide something behind her just like when she used to hide waffles when she was a child.

"What? Found a magic lamp?"

"Better. Today after the tests I was feeling sick. So, they took me to the hospital."

"How is that good?"

"Well, there I met this couple. Ted Wheeler and his wife, Karen Wheeler. Karen has also been pregnant for a similar time."

"Okay? And?"

"Well, they were very friendly. A very nice couple, they took me to their home."

"And that made you happy?"

"No no, so we were discussing random stuff. Karen is so nice, she made waffles for me. She was having a debate with her husband about baby names."

"And you had to barge in. I'm not complaining. But shouldn't you consider discussing things like these with your sister?" Becky said in a mocking tone. She realized what the good news was, but she liked the fact that her sister was smiling. It must have felt nice to make new friends after such a long time. Good times were coming.

"I'm sorry. They were so nice." Terry puffed her lips.

"Okay, okay, so what's the name?" Becky smiled, she had not seen her sister this happy since forever.

"Yeah, after a lot of debate we decided that it wasn't going anywhere. So, we decided to name each other's kids."

Terry stopped for a brief moment to feel the item she was hiding behind her, "I named their kid, and they named mine. Ted had to agree to that condition." Terry laughed.

"They gave me this gift to celebrate the names," she handed Becky a flower vase with a sinuous black line wrapped around its base. Becky turned it over, it had four words inscribed at its bottom.

*Michael Wheeler.*

*Jane Ives.*

"Mike and Jane?" Becky was mildly amused.

Terry flashed a smile and nodded, "Jane Ives and Michael Wheeler."

"Nice names," Becky smiled as she placed the flower vase on the table, she liked the name, in fact, both of them.

"Yeah, and since they were named together, maybe someday they'll become good friends." Terry flashed a wide grin.

"Jane Ives, Jane Eleven Ives, her name was written in the stars even before she was born. I like that name. I'm sorry Teresa, please forgive me," Becky closed her eyes.

A few minutes after Becky surrendered to fate, in a cabin near the indistinct town named Hawkins, Indiana, Eleven entered her room with a huge grin plastered on her face. She was feeling so happy tonight. Mike came and celebrated her birthday. More friends would have been lovely, but she wasn't complaining. In fact, Mike was the only one who she desperately wanted to celebrate her birthday with. Tomorrow she will give Mike the surprise of his life. Then she walked to the window to close it and suddenly gasped. The photo frame which she kept on the bed had fallen on the floor. She picked it up and grimaced as she noticed a crack in the glass. It was her fault, she should've closed the window before leaving. She carefully wiped the smudges from the glass and placed it beside her pillow. She'd have Hopper change the glass tomorrow. She went to sleep with a smile on her face. Terry Ives kept smiling through the cracked glass.

## **Epilogue**

Somewhere in the state of Indiana, the fire department was woken up at night by multiple frantic telephones calls. The chief pressed the alarm button and ran to the eleventh fire-engine, they needed their

biggest gun for this. They had a tough night ahead of them, somewhere in the sleepy suburbs a gas explosion had blown up a house, and then the flames proceeded to burn it to the ground. The eleventh fire-engine screamed through the night to save a home which was already consumed by fate.

Somewhere in the state of Indiana, an old shopkeeper placed a broken clock on the table. The technician took out a screwdriver and proceeded to work on it. Before the technician turned the clock over, the shopkeeper noticed that the hands had moved. He was perplexed, now the hour hand rested at 11 and minutes hand rested at 12, 11:00. He also noticed that unlike before, the minute hand twitched as if it wanted to help the hour hand run away from 11. He scratched his head a few times, even a moment ago when he had laid it on the counter it showed 10.59 and the arms were not moving. He thought hard about it and let it go.

Somewhere in the state of Indiana, a florist received a large parcel from the mailman. He thanked the mailman and proceeded to open the package. He used a crowbar to rip apart the wooden casing and cursed loudly. There was an intricately designed statue placed inside the box, one that he had seen nearly a year ago in a curio shop and instantly fell in love with it. It took him a long time to save enough money to buy it, but the statue was damaged during transport. It was a strange statue, a woman stood on a pedestal with her left arm raised towards the sky. Intricately designed clothes made of burnt clay flowed around her, there was a blindfold that covered her eyes. Beneath her feet lied a broken weigh scale that was initially supposed to be attached to the raised arm. The florist then looked at her right arm and sighed a breath of relief. Her right arm was still intact, and it held a long double-edged sword. The florist looked at the pedestal, the inscription read, 'Justice.'

Somewhere in the state of Indiana, a man with white hair and black suit was carefully assessing the object that he had retrieved some

time back. It brought old memories, unlike the events from sometime back, these were good ones. He smiled absently as he placed it on the table and took out a magnifying glass. He made a mental note of making some small repairs when he would get some free time. A woman got off the phone and came to him in a slow, calculated walk.

"We're ready to execute, Boss."

-X-

The old man raised his arms to the sky as his voice roared in the wind, 'In a place far away from the reach of mortal men, in a place where an army waited patiently, a horn sounded to declare the beginning of Armageddon, the end of all creation.'

***The saga continues in Armageddon Part 2: Gravity.***